

FIRE AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT IN EARLY MODERN CITIES AND TOWNS OF CROATIAN AND SLAVONIAN KINGDOM

Hrvoje PETRIĆ*

In Early modern period, Croatian lands were on the borderlines of three political systems: Habsburg Monarchy (which Croatian and Slavonnian Kingdom was a part of), Ottoman Empire and Venetian Republic, making the Croatian lands a tri-border region (Triplex Confinium).¹ The inter-linking of fires and urban environment of free royal boroughs in Croato-Slavonnian Kingdom in early modern period is relatively under-researched. This paper therefore will focus on fires and urban environment of four towns with free royal borough charter: Zagreb, Varaždin, Koprivnica and Križevci.

In early modern period, Zagreb consisted of two urban strongholds – a free royal borough Gradec and Episcopal (canonical) Zagreb (known as Kap-tol) and its suburb. At the end of early Modern Era, most population was living in suburbs – Ilica, Nova Ves, Vlaška Ves and on both banks Medveščak stream, dividing the free royal borough from Episcopal and canonical Zagreb. In mid-16th century, citizens treated Zagreb as the capital and main political center of Croatia, so in 1557 the Parliament of Croato-Slavonnian Kingdom brought a resolution, proclaiming it the capital city of Croato-Slavonnian Kingdom. Around the year 1600, Zagreb's communities had about 3200 inhabitants;

* Hrvoje Petrić, M.A., University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, History Department, Zagreb

¹ See: Drago Roksandić, *The Triplex Confinium. International Research Project: objectives, approaches and methods, Microhistory of the Triplex Confinium, International Project Conference Paper (Budapest, March 21-22, 1997)* (Budapest, 1998), pp. 7 – 26.; Drago Roksandić, *Triplex Confinium ili o granicama i regijama hrvatske povijesti 1500-1800* (Zagreb, 2003); Drago Roksandić (ed.), *Microhistory of the Triplex Confinium, International Project Conference Paper (Budapest, March 21-22, 1997)* (Budapest, 1998); Drago Roksandić – Nataša Štefanec (eds.), *Constructing Border Societies on the Triplex Confinium, International Project Conference Papers 2 "Plan and Practice. How to Construct a Border Society? The Triplex Confinium c. 1700-1750"* (Graz, December 9-12, 1998) (Budapest, 2000); Drago Roksandić, Ivan Mimica, Nataša Štefanec i Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić (eds.), *Triplex Confinium (1500-1800): Ekohistorija* (Split-Zagreb, 2003).

around the year 1700 population was 3600; at the end of 18th century (with suburbs and villages) around 8000 inhabitants.²

In late 16th century, the town of Varaždin was the seat of Slavonian Military Border, and –at the same time – a free royal borough. In 17th and 18th century, it expanded strongly in economy and culture; from 1767 to 1776 it served as the capital city of Croatia, with the then Croatian government, Croatian Royal Council (Hrvatsko kraljevsko vijeće) having their sessions here. Around the year 1600, there were about 3000 people in Varaždin; at the end of 18th century, the population was about 5500.³

Križevci (before the year 1752 unification, there were two settlements, Upper and Lower Križevci) and Koprivnica were typical border towns, being right on the borderline with the Ottoman Empire. Although both towns had free royal borough charters, they both were military strongholds and captaincy seats for the Slavonian Military Border.

Around the year 1700, Križevci had a population of about 1100 people; at the end of 18th century, it had the population of 2000. In the second half of 17th century, Koprivnica had about 2000, by the end of 18th century - 3500 people.⁴

With traditional house building and high density of population, Croatian Slavonian Kingdom was poised with heavy fires that spread quickly. In the first half of 16th century, almost every single house in Varaždin was made of timber; when the town was less populated, fires were scarce.⁵ Rooftop materials in Varaždin houses were mostly straw, reed and oak planks.⁶ These materials were highly flammable, that would help fire to spread quickly, especially if there was wind. There was an identical situation in other towns like Križevci and Koprivnica, where homes were mostly made of oak timber, plastered with mud and whitewashed with slaked lime. Most houses were covered with straw,

² See: Stjepan Krivošić, *Zagreb i njegovo stanovništvo od najstarijih vremena do sredine XIX. stoljeća* (Zagreb, 1981); Gjur Szabo, *Stari Zagreb* (Zagreb, 1990); Lelja Dobornić, *Slobodni i kraljevski grad Zagreb* (Zagreb, 1992); Franjo Buntak, *Povijest Zagreba* (Zagreb, 1996).

³ See: Andre Mohorović (ed.), *Varaždinski zbornik* (Varaždin, 1983); Mira Ilijanić, *Urbanizam-graditeljstvo-kultura* (Varaždin, 1999); Ante Gabričević, *Stanovništvo Varaždina tijekom minulih stoljeća* (Zagreb – Varaždin, 2002); Hrvoje Petrić, „Procjene broja stanovnika i ekonomskog razvoja gradskih naselja sjeverozapadne Hrvatske od kraja 16. do početka 18. stoljeća“, *Stvaralački potencijali u funkciji kulturnog razvoja sjeverozapadne Hrvatske* (Zagreb-Varaždin, 2002).

⁴ Dragutin Feletar, *Podravina, 1.* (Koprivnica, 1988); Stjepan Krivošić, *Stanovništvo i demografske prilike u sjeverozapadnoj Hrvatskoj u XVIII. i prvoj polovini XIX. stoljeća* (Varaždin, 1991); Hrvoje Petrić, *Koprivnica na razmeđu epoha (1765-1870)* (Koprivnica-Zagreb, 2000); Hrvoje Petrić, *Koprivnica u 17. stoljeću – okoliš, demografske, društvene i gospodarske promjene u pograničnom gradu* (Samobor, 2005).

⁵ Mirko Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva u Varaždinu 1220.-1955.* (Varaždin, 1955), p. 13.

⁶ Rudolf Horvat, *Povijest grada Varaždina* (Varaždin, 1993), p. 119.

only the richer homes had rooftops made of oak timber. Inside the stronghold, there were several buildings made of brick, however, they too were with oak rooftops. Basically, there was not a single building with roofing tiles, generally rare and scarcely used in the entire Croato-Slavonian Kingdom. Outside strongholds, buildings with brick construction were forbidden in vicinity of the stronghold, and permitted only if built at cannon ball-distance. All this helped spreading of fires, especially at windy weather.⁷ Also, the homes inside the town walls were densely populated, as houses and buildings were joined. This enabled fires to quickly spread and relatively often catastrophe.

The great fire of Varaždin in 1646 (historic documents call this «a pitiful accident») swallowed majority of buildings and homes, leaving the remaining buildings badly damaged. The fire started inside the town walls, in an abandoned, ugly community. After the fire, these ugly buildings were replaced by the new ones, which later became «a decoration and pride of the entire town». The 1646 fire helped new, better buildings to be built, replacing ugly, abandoned town district.⁸

Building of Zagreb communities started immediately after the risk of possible Ottoman raids had been removed. Very few buildings were made of solid materials, which would be fireproof to great fires.⁹ In 1533, there was a fire in Zagreb, which destroyed to the ground Episcopal timber-made manors.¹⁰

The greatest fires in Zagreb communities were in the years 1624, 1645, 1674, 1706 and 1731. Those fires had catastrophic effects, as buildings were made the old-fashioned way, and predominant building material was wood. Most of Zagreb buildings were made of timber logs and rooftops cover with wooden planks, tiles (or straw). It only took a light breeze to fan fire, or even a spark, and immediately the entire town blocks of buildings were on fire. Gradual use of bricks in building of convents, homes for nobility and rich citizens, palaces, Episcopal manors – in time subdued devastating power of great fires. In 17th century, homes of Zagreb citizens were made of timber, built on a tiny, narrow lot; only rich merchants and traders gradually built brick-made homes. Round the year 1700, even nobility had modest timber-made buildings; only in 18th century, with intense settlement of local nobility buildings and palaces, more fireproof and not highly flammable, were erected.¹¹

⁷ Rudolf Horvat, *Poviest slob. i kr. grada Koprivnice* (Zagreb, 1943), p. 59.

⁸ *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini* (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)(ZPV), 6, (Varaždin, 1995-1997), pp. 152-153, pp. 205-206.

⁹ Ljudevit Ivančan, „Požari Zagreba XVII. i XVIII. stolj.“, *Bogoslovska smotra*, XIX (1931): 78-92.

¹⁰ Baltazar Adam Krčelić, *Povijest stolne crkve zagrebačke* (Zagreb, 1994), p. 254.

¹¹ Ivan Kampuš, Ivan Karaman, *Tisućljetni Zagreb – od davnih naselja do suvremenog velegrada* (Zagreb, 1989), pp. 87 - 88.; Igor Karaman, *Privredni život banske Hrvatske od 1700. do 1850* (Zagreb, 1989), pp. 247 - 249.

Causes of fire were different. Majority of fires broke thanks to human error; wind would help them spread quickly. It's impossible to find a link between climate change and frequency of fires of that time. The Ottomans started some fires. For example, on two occasions in the years 1476.¹² and 1539¹³ they burned Križevci to the ground; intensity of fires is unknown. Yet, we can assume that Križevci's Upper town with St. Augustin friary was burned down to the ground; it's hard to believe that the Ottomans would have spared a suburb outside the defense walls.¹⁴

In 1533 taxpayers' listing there was a record of Križevci's devastation.¹⁵ This meant there was a great disaster, and some authors assume it was a great fire,¹⁶ obviously started during the raid led by Ottomans' Sultan Suleiman the Great in 1532.¹⁷

During 16th and 17th centuries, Koprivnica had been relatively often in peril by great fires¹⁸, however, very few records on those fires were preserved. In 1559, there was a great fire set up by an Ottoman deserter, and Koprivnica was turned into «ashes and wasteland».¹⁹ After the 1559 fire, all the way to year 1700, there were no great fires (or at least we have no reliable records on them); the next recorded fire was of the year 1700, when four women were blamed and accused of casing fire, and being witches; they were interrogated and tortured, but they never confessed their blame for the fire.²⁰

We have records on the fire in Varaždin in year 1587, and have the culprit, as the fire started in his home. During investigation, he claimed Varaždin had frequent fires, and as a general rule nobody ever paid any damages to anyone, unless due to own negligence. The same man claimed that, unlike Varaždin, other towns had organized fire fighting. Accordingly, Varaždin in those times did not have any organized fire-fighting service.²¹

¹² *Monumenta historica liberae regiae civitatis Zagrabiae* (Zagreb, 1902), p. 264.

¹³ HS 2, p. 447.

¹⁴ Vladimir Bedenko, "Križevci – razvoj grada", *Glasnik Arhitektonskog fakulteta*, 3 (1975): 14.

¹⁵ Josip Adamček, Ivan Kampuš, *Popisi i obračuni poreza u Hrvatskoj u XV. i XVI. stoljeću* (Zagreb, 1976), p. 133.

¹⁶ Neven Budak, „Društveni i privredni razvoj Križevaca do sredine 19. stoljeća“, *Križevci – grad i okolica*, (Zagreb, 1993), p. 43.

¹⁷ Ranko Pavleš, „Četiri posjeda u srednjovjekovnom kalničkom kotaru uz potok Koprivnicu“, *Cris*, VIII (2006), no. 1: 10.

¹⁸ R. Horvat, *Poviest Koprivnice*, p. 59.

¹⁹ Rudolf Horvat, "Koprivničke listine XVI. vijeka", *Vjesnik Kraljevskog hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskog zemaljskog arkiva*, XVI, (Zagreb, 1914), pp. 281 - 282.

²⁰ Državni arhiv u Varaždinu (DAV), Arhiv grada Koprivnice (AGK), Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Koprivnice (ZPGK), 1698-1707, 17. 02. 1700.

²¹ ZPV 1, 223-224.

Several Varaždin citizens sued in 1599 one particular man, Ivan Losak, who was blamed to have caused a fire in 1599. From Losak's home, the fire spread all over Varaždin's street of St. Vid and the fire swallowed 66 buildings. At first, the municipal court sentenced the accused Losak to confiscation of all properties and banishment of him, together with his wife and children, from Varaždin. However, after several of his friends intervened, the court pardoned him and his fellow citizens too, dropping their claims for their burned homes «as they all were mortals and shared the same fate; nobody would ever know ahead what the future may bring». The court ruled that Losak ought to pay respect to his fellow citizens, particularly those who suffered losses in the fire. «He should never feel anger toward them, nor may he mock them, but on the contrary- be humble and thankful and praise the Lord for their welfare».²²

In the year 1624, Croato-Slavonian Kingdom was struck by great drought. It was only May, when all fields went dry and crops failed. Zagreb diocese started repentance processions and prayers, praying God to send rain.²³ Bologna President of the Collegium of the Magna Charta, Andrija Otvačić (Andreas Ottavicius) made record, that in May of 1624 all meadows went dry and grassless, and livestock had no pasture to graze upon, and there were bleak prospects for any harvest. On 27 May, 1624.²⁴, there was a procession from Zagreb cathedral to St. John's parish church in Nova Ves (Zagreb). After the procession, the skies turned gray and the evening brought thunderstorm and rain. Otvačić wrote, it was terrifying to watch thunderbolts, lightning, high winds and rains. After nine hours of tempest, a thunderbolt struck the cathedral roof and fire was smoldering for two, three hours, which finally broke out into full fire blaze across wooden roofs. Strong wind was hurling flames from the cathedral all over the city. As cathedral canonics kept gunpowder and coal in the cathedral attic, two of them, Šimun Bratulić and Andrija Draganić rushed to the attic to remove gunpowder before the fire got to it.²⁵ Zagreb inhabitants were asleep, so nobody could come to rescue. When some frightened people gathered around cathedral, the fire already was consuming the parish manor next to the cathedral.²⁶

The Zagreb fire of 29 March 1645 was caused by a student tenant at St. Mark's square, in the household of Ivan Ručić, deputy governor of Zagreb County.

²² *Protocollo magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasini (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)* (Varaždin 1990-1992), p. 295.

²³ Mijo Korade, Biskup Petar Domitrović, *Zagrebački biskupi i nadbiskupi* (Zagreb, 1995), p. 299.

²⁴ Kronika Bolonjskog kolegija stavlja požar u noć subote pred Duhove, dok ljetopis isusovačkog kolegija stavlja požar u subotu pred duhove. Usp. Fancev 1934, 50; Annali, 104; Vanino 1969, 291.

²⁵ *Annali del collegio Ungaro-Illirico di Bologna 1553-1764* (Bologna, 1988), p. 104.

²⁶ Rudolf Horvat, *Prošlost grada Zagreba* (Zagreb, 1992), pp. 18 - 19.

This student got drunk and in his drunken state, around 10 p.m. caused fire. As there was high wind at that particular moment, the fire caught the roof of St. Mark's church, with wood-tile roofing (as most of then homes in Zagreb); wind carried flames from the roof of St. Mark all over city; in half an hour, the entire Upper town was in flames, except for the Franciscan friary and the church of Blessed Virgin Mary.²⁷

On Easter Monday of 27 March 1665, Varaždin was hit by catastrophic fire, cased by the townier Uršula, resident of a street, outside town walls. On Easter, she brought into the church a basket of food to be blessed; under the meat she hid a wolf's bone and on Easter Monday she sent her maid with cattle for grazing; in order to protect the herd from wolves' attacks, Uršula set on fire the wolf's bone, and went around the house with smoldering bone, praying for divine protection; meanwhile, a heavy wind started to blow and picked flames from the bone to her straw rooftop; the fire spread from her home to the entire town within the town walls. The court decided that her husband's two acres of plow land be confiscated as retribution for burning down almost entire town of Varaždin. After the fire, town magistrate records (town records) were filled with land sale contracts.²⁸

Soldiers, who had a quarrel with the household members, where they had been stationed, set up fire of year 1745 in Varaždin. A number of homes were burned down in the fire and a brewery among them too. Soldiers, blamed for the fire, were arrested. Some witnesses claimed that one soldier had powers of invisibility, so he was invisible when he had set up fire; they claimed he also committed other felonies, knife assaults on citizens, and with the help of other soldiers he was robbing citizens.²⁹

A catastrophic fire, that broke in Varaždin on 25 April 1776, was caused by a 17-year old youngster Jakob Verčec from a suburb Sračinec, by careless smoking; he, and another two town serfs, were turning lime into whitewash; he had a toothache; he believed smoking would relieve the pain; he kept smoking, while looking for a bucket to bring water needed for lime; by mistake he took a bucket that was used to bring food to pigs; a big sow spotted him bringing bucket and ran toward him for food; he got scared and began to run away; the sow knocked him down, and his smoking cigarette got into straw, lit it up and the fire broke out, helped by strong winds. So what caused fire was a toothache, smoking and a sow. The young culprit was prosecuted and punished with beating; the fire was made worse by a merchant and his carelessness, as he had gunpowder stashed in his house, which exploded and added fuel to the fire.³⁰

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁸ *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasдини (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)*, 7, (Varaždin 1997), 253-254, 305-306, 314 etc.

²⁹ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva u Varaždinu*, p. 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23; R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, p. 267.

Consequences of fires were usually catastrophic. Often the entire town blocks were destroyed. Rebuilding was slow and costly. Investment into rebuilding homes often caused that extra money, saved for business and additional values, had to be wasted on building again. If people didn't have money, after a fire their very existence was jeopardized.

After the 1559 fire, the King Ferdinand Habsburg, planned to encourage town rebuilding, and to compensate all citizens with damages. Hence his decision to relieve all Koprivnica citizens of all tax duties (regular and extraordinary) in the next nine years, and they were pardoned from paying war tribute to the royal Chambers. The same fire destroyed the free royal charter issued to Koprivnica on 29 April, 1558, so the King re-issued it on 24 December, 1559.³¹

Catastrophic fire in Varaždin of 27th May 1582 had horrible effect. Afterwards, Varaždin population counted time as prior and after the Great fire; later, they would be measuring time before and after the plague. Fear of fire was identical to the fear of the Ottoman raids; Varaždin people in fear took their valuables to a security of the town of Ptuj (in Styria) for safekeeping.³²

Varaždin people, who suffered great losses in the fire, were so poor afterwards that they had to work as servants in other people's homes or become beggars in the streets, in order to survive. Many people were left jobless, as their entire estate was destroyed in the fire.³³ Some citizens of Varaždin lost all their identification papers in the fire, so the town magistrate decided to re-issue them to all home owners who lost everything in the fire, and the town's notary public was to help with transcripts and document copies.³⁴

The town protocol speaks of year 1592 fire, describing it as «pitiful and grieving town of Varaždin». The townner Valent Anošić borrowed money from the town's parish priest for purchase of building material to rebuild his burned home; another one, Petar Lastezini listed all his movable and immovable belongings lost in the fire, along with the house, lost in the fire; his house had been built by his parents after another fire on 21 May 1582 «with great sacrifice and enormous financial investment». All that was left by his parents now was a few gold pieces and nothing more; so he was forced to sell his wife's dowry in Varaždin and Zagreb's Gradec, or seek help from friends and his masters, so he could rebuild his home on his property; this is why Lastezini pleaded with the Varaždin magistrate to appraise his land; they responded positively and the lands was appraised at the value of 60 Hungarian forint worth.³⁵

³¹ R. Horvat, *Koprivničke listine XVI. vijeka*, pp. 281 - 282.

³² ZPV 1, 30.

³³ ZPV 1, 237-238, 346-347.

³⁴ ZPV 1, 31.

³⁵ ZPV 2, 40, 97-99.

Another records, relating to year 1592 fire in Varaždin were recorded; it referred to damages for Marko Serafiner. In his absence, his wife took their belongings (gold and silverware) to Pavle Loborščak's cellar for safekeeping; the same cellar was used by five other Varaždin towners; all personal belongings were destroyed by fire, except for the gold, silver and similar stuff; after the fire, other owners came by and retook possession of their belongings, save for Marko Serafiner's wife who came and found almost nothing; this was a subject of proceedings before the magistrate.³⁶

The fire of 1592 damaged a number of public objects, for example, the town hall building and the St. Nicholas church, both in need for new roofs; the magistrate decided that anyone, who failed to pay tribute of one Hungarian forint for church rebuilding would not be allowed inside the church and his/her pew taken out; as there was no enough money for this, town magistrate decided that all hayfields on Dravica be sold to those who want or need them, and such collected money be used for church roof; it still was a big problem, so the magistrate decreed that all in possession of livestock that could be used for pulling lumber had to surrender them for free transport of lumber and roof beams; the town magistrate later decided that all money from last wills and testaments, willed to church, no matter where, be immediately taken to the town magistrate be used for church roofing.³⁷

When in 1624 Zagreb cathedral caught fire, its bishop Petar Domitrović – seeing how the main altar and church valuables were in danger of fire and nobody dared help, he personally. Barefoot and bare headed «as all present were showing admiration» ran through the flames and charcoal, got to the main altar, saving monstrance and ciborium, and praying out aloud: «Give, o Lord, your wrath onto me, not onto thy house!». The bishop escaped the fire without any harm.³⁸ He was followed by a canonic Petar Kupres who took from the walls all valuable draperies and rugs, and a minute after the cathedral arched dome collapsed; in a few hours time, the cathedral was robbed of its inventory: the antependium to the main altar, the famous great altar by bishop Osvald (from 1489.), the remaining wooden altars, the organ and the pews, and the cathedral bells melted due to high temperature.³⁹ Luckily, the fire didn't catch the vestry, with cathedral treasures and its archives. Bishop's residence was burned down to the ground, and Zagreb bishop was left «penniless» and without roof over his head. Rebuilding of burned cathedral was long and painful.⁴⁰

³⁶ ZPV 2, 123-124, 149.

³⁷ ZPV 2, 110, 117.

³⁸ Franjo Fancev, "Grača za povijest školskog i književnog rada isusovačkog kolegija u Zagrebu (1606-1772)", *Starine*, 37 (1934): 50; R. Horvat, *Prošlost grada Zagreba*, p. 19.

³⁹ *Annali del collegio Ungaro-Illirico di Bologna*, pp. 104 - 105.

⁴⁰ Lelja Dobronić, *Biskupski i kaptolski Zagreb* (Zagreb, 1991), pp. 35 - 40; Andrija Lukinović, *Zagreb – devetstoljetna biskupija* (Zagreb, 1995), pp. 194 - 195.; M. Korade, *Biskup Petar Domitrović*, p. 299, p. 309.

The fire of 1624 was described by a contemporary historian and Zagreb canonic, Juraj Rattkay: «In 1624 AD, on the second day of Pentecost, while the Sun was setting down, dark clouds were gathering in the sky, Eol was shaking everything with its wild blows and quickly came the rain down from the clouds; then the brightest flames torched the sky and in the wildest push a thunderbolt lit up the sky, striking fiercely on the dome of St. Stephen basilica; the thunderbolt broke the arch and a marble tombstone, breaking it in five pieces and the flames went underground; yet flames and sparks hid themselves in the roof, so the flames slowly inched over the supporting beams; at eleven o'clock in the evening, a huge fire broke out; when Volcano entered into the temple, savagely it ate the bishop's citadel, surrounding towers intertwined with and the church tower with a bell; and some neighboring buildings would have gone in the flames, if it wasn't for plenty of water poured down on them; all would have gone in this misfortunate fire; since the very foundations were shaken, supported by a giant iron cross in the attic- a Spanish-looking one, its tip in gold -so its mighty weight too fell onto this God's house dome; it helped it break, opening up a huge hole, and pouring down came flames with sparks on the main altar (a magnificent work of art by bishop Osvald, delicately made and famous for its thick layers of ancient gold); it all turned the altar into ashes and dust; the main altar's requisites, saved in the same place for processions, were also badly damaged, as well as two minor altars. Total damages of these altars were impossible to calculate, let alone repaired or substituted. Christian piety of all classes and ranks was needed, people's generosity too, so the parliament members were competing to show their religious devotion to faith; the viceroy Zrinski was an example, donating two hundred gold pieces (also called talir), plenty of timber for construction, as much as needed for rebuilding of the church.»⁴¹ Cathedral reconstruction in Zagreb was mostly completed in 1632, with the help of Zrinski family, the king and the queen themselves, and contributions from many churchgoers.⁴² Members of Congregation of Virgin Mary Annunciation, found in Zagreb in 1614, in year 1624 set up a play «King Solomon building the Lord's temple». The great fire was behind this theatrical idea.⁴³

An example of a typical fire is Zagreb fire of 1645, when the citizens were asleep; as they were waking up, they would find their own roofs over their heads in flames; many people barely saved their lives and little, if anything, of their possessions; they only had time to put on some clothes; many were throwing their belongings, like bed linens, clothes, food or furniture, out of

⁴¹ Georgio Rattkay, *Memoria regum, et banorum regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae, Slavoniae ab origine sua usque ad praesentum annum 1652. deducta* (Viennae, 1652), p. 197; Juraj Rattkay, *Spomen na kraljeve i banove Kraljevstava Dalmacije, Hrvatske i Slavonije* (Zagreb, 2001), p. 253.

⁴² Franjo Buntak, «Neki podaci i opažanja o ekonomskim prilikama u Zagrebu u 17. stoljeću», *Iz starog i novog Zagreba*, IV, (Zagreb, 1968), p. 67.

⁴³ Miroslav Vanino, *Isusovci i hrvatski narod*, 1, (Zagreb, 1969), p. 291.

the windows, yet very few things were saved as Zagreb streets were narrow, so the things caught up fire, poring down from the blazing rooftops. There was a northwest-southeast wind blowing; it torched the gates Kamenita vrata and a huge square tower; the fire caught all Jesuit buildings (school, friary, St. Joseph seminary and St. Catherine church); all the books in Jesuit library were torched down; Jesuits only managed to save little of church silverware, and mass vestments. Calculations showed that Jesuits suffered losses of 40.000 forint. The wind took blazing roof tiles across Medveščak stream into the Kaptol part of Zagreb, where the fire swallowed all manors and buildings of canonics in Kaptol, as well as citizens' homes in nearby streets. The fire destroyed Franciscan friary and its church, catching up the cathedral roof and bishop's court.⁴⁴

Another detailed record of 1645 fire in Zagreb was written down by the historian Rattkay: «Not to miss a complete misery and Lord's punishment, in 1645 we had several fires in different places, fiercely blazing across Zagreb in March. After the fire broke out at nine p.m. in the Upper town, also known as Gradečko brdo, the flames were on such a wild rampage, that just a third of the city was spared; to add up on existing misery, high winds plotted to bring peril from everywhere; the fire spread out to Collegium, and it perished in flames together with two glorious churches and a bishop's tower in a saddest way; but, the rage of the flames never stopped there, moving on to Vlaška ves, just below the bishop's tower, bringing disaster and getting away with it; although it destroyed priceless possessions and valuables, the greatest sorrow was to see four famous churches being destroyed: the cathedral of St. Stephen the King, parish church of St. Mark, St. Catherine's Jesuit church, with Collegium, and St. Francis church with their friary, famous for its quarters, where once had slept Seraph himself; God then decided to bring upon us even greater revenge, so –while we trying to save and rebuild the cathedral – the very next year He brought down the dome, already weakened from pressures of rains, storms and high winds; a supporting colon collapsed, damaging everything so much that it pressed and crumbled down the choir stalls, bishop's chair, five altars under the choir stalls, half of the pews on the left side, and the treasure – listing this gives me the greatest pain – the noblest organ worth many thousands, all old, magnificent works of art».⁴⁵

Another witness, a Zagreb Jesuit, too wrote down his thoughts after witnessing the 1645 fire: «When the day broke out, a pitiful scenery met the eye; between the naked walls tile stoves protruded, and smoldered ceilings of burned homes; streets were full of groups of people of all ranks, crying out loudly and pitying own misfortune; all the Jesuits acquired in the past 40 years, it all went in flames in just 3 hours; at first, they fled to Capuchin Franciscan

⁴⁴ R. Horvat, *Prošlost grada Zagreba*, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Georgio Rattkay, *Memoria regum, et banorum regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae, Slavoniae ab origine sua usque ad praesentum annum 1652. deducta*, pp. 229-230; Juraj Rattkay, *Spomen na kraljeve i banove Kraljevstava Dalmacije, Hrvatske i Slavonije*, p. 274.

friary for sanctuary, the fire; the Franciscans were very hospitable with the Jesuits, providing shelter for 3 days. Afterwards, some Jesuits returned to live in the least damaged part of their friary, missing only the roof; these Jesuits served mass at St. Catherine's vestry. Other Jesuits went to other Croatian towns, each looking for a shelter at his friends' parishes; they remained there until the autumn season, as schools in Zagreb had summer break».⁴⁶

After the 1645 fire in Zagreb, a period of rebuilding began «with builders, carpenters, workmen, from all parts of the country were summoned to help, well paid and overseen, without break and rushing to finish the dome, the roof and everything else of importance that the fire had consumed; all needed to be restored to its original beauty and use; as the bishop rebuilt his palace, he also used his own money to restore the choir stalls and the organ».⁴⁷

According to a report by Sigismund Trautmanstorf, a member of the Austria's hinterland ranks, on 1 May 1648 a fire destroyed more than a half of Varaždin.⁴⁸ This clearly applied to the buildings inside the walls («inner town»). In relatively short period of time, several hundred of houses perished in flames, and the fire spread by the wind that blew. Varaždin town magistrate asked the King Ferdinand III. to relieve them from Royal chamber taxes, due to devastation the fire caused; the King granted their request and on 27 October 1649 he pardoned them from paying overdue taxes of 500 Hungarian forint, specifically naming the reason as «half of Varaždin perishing in the fire of 1 May 1648».⁴⁹

In 1665, a fire in Varaždin, helped by the wind from a suburb (Brodovski konec) crossed the town walls and caught up with the entire inner town of Varaždin; the fire engulfed all Varaždin churches (parish church, Jesuit church and Franciscan church), and what was spared was just eight homes and new stables, owned by Varaždin stronghold military commander; towers on town walls were too destroyed, and the fire threatened the main armory with gunpowder magazine, located in one of the towers; this would have multiplied the number of casualties greatly; beside the inner town buildings, the entire suburb outside the upper gates was destroyed in the fire too, from the east all the way to the stronghold's toll gates; a part of the main street and Vidovski konec street, toward Biškupec village; the next day the fire caught Vidovski konec burning all buildings down very quickly; a number of people fell into poverty, many of them forced to beg for food from door to door, as they were starving; the casualties included several children and one woman; as the fire spread out quickly, there was no time to save livestock, and majority was killed in pigsties, barns and stables; some people inhaled so much smoke, that for

⁴⁶ Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica Zagreb (NSK), R 7821, *Historia Collegii Societatis Iesu in monte Graeco Zagrabiae siti*, I, pp. 123-124; R. Horvat, *Prošlost Zagreba*, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Daniele Farlati, *Illyrici sacri*, V, (Venetiis, 1775), p. 580.

⁴⁸ Radoslav Lopašić, *Spomenici Hrvatske krajine*, 2, (Zagreb, 1885), p. 283.

⁴⁹ Rudolf Horvat, *Povijest grada Varaždina*, (Varaždin 1993), p. 182.

days they were dying of smoke poisons; the notary public made remark that the fire was «an obvious punishment and God's wrath for superstition and lack of faith», adding that he and his wife were too poisoned by the smoke but their lives were saved.⁵⁰ Due to the fire, a great impoverishment fell on Varaždin people; so the citizens vowed to make procession every year at Easter, showing humility and asking God to show mercy from future fires. When the news of this tragedy reached Sofija, widowed wife of the late Croato-Slavonnian vice-roy Nikola Zrinski, she immediately sent help from Čakovec, the seat of her estates; across Drava river she sent several carts of wheat, to be handed down to impoverished Varaždin people, who lost everything in the fire. After this fire, in 1671 Varaždin was the first town to build homes with stone roof tiles, and the very first brick tile roofing was done on the Jesuit residency.⁵¹

On 25 June, 1674 around 2 p.m. in Zagreb, the home of city's magistrate Blaž caught up fire. In just two hours, it quickly spread and burned down the entire Upper town, except for Franciscan school, Capuchin friary and several homes leaning onto the southern city wall, between the Capuchin friary and Jesuit school. This fire too destroyed the church of St. Catherine's Jesuit church that with great sacrifices had been rebuilt after the 1645 fire. The fire burned down the Jesuit Collegium, their seminary of St. Joseph, St. Mark's parish church and the neighboring parish rectory. The fire badly damaged the chapel of St. Ursula, a few towers, city hall building, St. Clara convent and their church of Holy Trinity. Right next to the convent, at Popov toranj tower, there was gunpowder magazine, and the fire triggered a huge explosion, so the northern and southern winds carried on the flaming roof tiles to Kaptol and Vlaška street; many homes were burned down there, along with stables and manors of the canonic.⁵² Luckily enough, a southern wind was blowing too, and it prevented the fire from spreading further; moreover, a heavy rain started to pour down, and it saved Kaptol from perishing altogether.⁵³

Vitezović's chronic mention, that the fire of 1674 had «the entire Zagreb and majority of Kaptol» swallowed in the flames.⁵⁴ A contemporary citizen, canonic Kovačević writes that two Zagreb canonic died of the fire («bad fumes and poisonous air»).⁵⁵

On 14 June 1706 Zagreb was hit by yet another fire; Bologna chronic recorded, that the «Zagreb's entire Upper town looked like Troy, when the Greeks had set it up on fire». The fire was so huge, that the entire Upper town had no

⁵⁰ *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasдини (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina*, 7, p. 55, pp. 253-254.

⁵¹ R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, pp. 199, 201.

⁵² *Annali del collegio Ungaro-Illirico di Bologna 1553-1764*, p. 138.

⁵³ R. Horvat, *Povijest Zagreba*, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁴ Pavao Ritter Vitezović, *Kronika aliti szpomenek vsega szveta vekov...*, Zagreb s.a., p. 199.

⁵⁵ Ljudevit Ivančan, *Stari i novi Zagreb. Historičke i kulturne crtice o Zagrebu* (Zagreb, 1925), p. 244.

single surviving building. The fire also destroyed all contemporary churches, and most of Kaptol manors.⁵⁶ Lesser were the consequences from another Zagreb fire, that engulfed most of the Upper town on 30 May, 1731, starting in St. Joseph's seminary.⁵⁷

As for Varaždin, there were several major fires in 18th century. For example, 1748 fire inflicted most damage on southern suburbs, with 119 homes destroyed by fire and several hundred stables and barns. In 1771, another fire was recorded, that destroyed 32 buildings and many stables and barns.⁵⁸

A huge fire was recorded in Križevci on 12 April 1775, and the parish priest wrote down the following remark on the fire: «around two o'clock in the afternoon, nearby the parish church, in a hamlet called Berek, there was a fire, which was helped by strong northerly wind; in only a quarter of an hour, it engulfed the entire Lower town, around the St. Florian's church; soon the entire Lower Križevci was destroyed and turned into ashes; nothing remained intact, save for the chimneys that pointed out to where their homes once had been; not a single house was spared, except for parish manor and two homes next to the graveyard, and Baron Magdalenic's stables; all estates and two smaller houses by Vrtlin creek were torched down; due to heavy fire and high winds, great danger fell upon the stronghold and the rest of the town; the total number of burned homes was 92, with accompanying buildings. Inhabitants could barely save any of their belongings. As they lost almost everything they owned, they scattered and told of the misfortune».⁵⁹

The fire of 25 April, 1776 in Varaždin had catastrophic consequences. Before the fire, it had 113 buildings inside the walls, in northern suburb, outside the walls additional 256, and in southern one 245 homes; altogether, some 614 buildings. The 1776 fire had the following disastrous effects: 70 homes totally, 11 partially destroyed (inner circle); northern suburb had 111 of them totally destroyed; in southern suburb 135 were destroyed completely; altogether, some 316 homes, more than half in Varaždin, were destroyed by the fire.⁶⁰ In the rebuilding period, entire Varaždin turned into one huge building site; as early as four years after the fire, the number of homes equaled the number prior to the fire of 1776, thanks to native settlers of Varaždin (merchants and artisans, primarily). Unlike most of nobility, they did not flee the town after disaster, but held on and used their own efforts to rebuilt it. The most intensive construction underwent in the period 1776-1781.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *Annali del collegio Ungaro-Illirico di Bologna 1553-1764*, p. 234.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 261, 268.

⁵⁸ R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, p. 245, p. 261.

⁵⁹ „Spomenica župe u Križevcima” (ed. Ljudevit Plačko), *Cris*, IX (2007), no. 1: 183.

⁶⁰ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva u Varaždinu*, pp. 143-145; R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, p. 267.

⁶¹ Ivy Lentić-Kugli, *Varaždin nakon požara 1776.*, (Zagreb 1973)

One of the great fires in Zagreb that occurred on 16 July 1786 swallowed 100 homes and St. Mary church of Dolac. The total damage caused by the fire was estimated at 140.269 forint, with several casualties, people dying in the fire. In Kaptol area, the fire destroyed many cottages, that later were replaced by new brick-built homes. At the same time, after this fire many streets were expanded and some were formed differently.⁶²

In the first two centuries of the early modern period, some preventive measures were introduced in order to protect from fire, as well as some fire-fighting procedures of limited scope. After a great fire of 1582 in Varaždin, towns set up three watch posts, with guards on lookout for possible fire.⁶³ In 1592 fore, it spread from the home of Juraj Čoklić «to the entire eastern and western suburbs, spreading further to the entire city, which ended up destroyed and erased». Čoklić had to compensate the church of St. Nicholas 100 Hungarian forint (later, it was cut down to 90 forint); each citizen of Varaždin had to pay a tribute of 1 forint.⁶⁴ This presented a security measure that would help prevent further disasters. In Varaždin, a culprit for a fire had to pay damages to his neighbors, as was, for example, decreed by a court decision in 1588 verdict.⁶⁵

Citizens of free royal boroughs in Croato-Slavonian Kingdom, beside looking for physical protection were also looking for spiritual protection, mostly praying to a Catholic patron saint St. Florian, believed to protect from a fire. St. Florian's chapel was built in Varaždin in 1669,⁶⁶ as a votive chapel after the 1665 fire. Citizens of Koprivnica vowed to St. Florian to pay tribute and give donations in exchange for protection from fire. This is how they collected funds for building a St. Florian altar on the northern wall of Koprivnica's St. Nicholas church⁶⁷, first mentioned in 1680.⁶⁸ Around 1738, Koprivnica citizens built a chapel for St. Florian⁶⁹, as a votive chapel after the fire of 1736 that had destroyed 33 homes inside the fortified part of the town.⁷⁰ A votive chapel of the same name was also built in Križevci after the fire in 1735.⁷¹

⁶² Tatjana Puškadija Ribkin, „Požar u Zagrebu 1786“, *Kaj*, 5-6 (1992): 77-82.

⁶³ *Protocollo magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasini (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)*, 1, p. 123.

⁶⁴ *Protocollo magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasini (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)*, 2, pp. 104-106, p. 110, pp. 117-118, p. 125.

⁶⁵ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva*, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁶ Ivy Lentić-Kugli, *Povijesna urbana cjelina grada Varaždina* (Zagreb, 1977), p. 39.

⁶⁷ R. Horvat, *Povijest Koprivnice*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Nadbiskupski arhiv Zagreb (NAZ), Kanonske vizitacije (KV), Prot. 90/II, 136.

⁶⁹ NAZ, KV, Prot. 94/VI, p. 348.

⁷⁰ R. Horvat, *Povijest Koprivnice*, p. 16.

⁷¹ NAZ, KV, Prot. 133/IV; Katarina Horvat-Levaj, „Tri kapele u Križevcima (Sv. Ladislav, Sv. Rok, Sv. Florijan)“, *Križevci – grad i okolica*, (Zagreb 1993), p. 190.

Some towns, on the other hand, were active in setting up preventive measures in fire protection. In 1599, Varaždin town authorities decided that in future each 10 homes had to provide 1 firm, long ladders and an iron bolt (of medium size) that two people would put up on a roof in flames. If there would be fire, these ladders and the iron bolt were to be carried to the fire spot. Citizens were obliged to carry out this ordinance under the penalty of paying fine of 2 Rhine forint.⁷² It looks as if these protective measures had effect on people, as the next fires were mentioned only in mid-17th century.

Citizens of Koprivnica suffered water shortage, which made fire extinguishing more difficult; as a rule, in putting out fires people did not use well water for drinking. Houses had makeshift water basins (holes dug in the ground) to keep drainage and rainwater, use- among other things - for extinguishing fires.⁷³ In Koprivnica, in 17th century the town authorities introduced night watchmen. Watchmen, patrolling the streets at night and watching out for fires performed this service.⁷⁴ Similar services were organized in other towns as well.

In 1767, the Croatian Royal Council gave order to the Varaždin town authorities to uphold restriction on drying flax and hemp fiber on house stoves, and smoking around barns and stables. Fires were spread over wooden chimneys as well, which had to be replaced by brick-built ones, an expensive task. According to 1768 records, Varaždin had awfully lot of chimneys that were a fire hazard, plus the citizens never took care of cleaning them regularly. In 1755, Varaždin had only one chimneysweeper, not paid on regular basis. The problem was also rebuilding homes in timber again, which was the cheapest building material. Some citizens of Varaždin protested when other rebuilt homes in wood, as they were aware of fire hazards. In 1771, the Hungarian Chamber representative proposed to the town authorities to help those who lost homes in fire rebuild in bricks and setting up stoves outside their houses.⁷⁵ Towns encouraged startup of brickworks where these inflammable building materials were made, thus decreasing fire hazard.⁷⁶

High authorities demanded building homes with fireproof materials, not only in Varaždin downtown center, but even further to the town outskirts, so for example in 1774, the Hungarian chamber demanded from Varaždin town authorities to replace burned-down homes of Sračinec village with raw brick buildings. When in 1776 fire in Varaždin more than half of buildings were destroyed by fire, the town authorities decreed a public prohibition of wooden

⁷² *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini (Zapisnici poglavarstva grada Varaždina)*, 3, pp. 234-235.

⁷³ Leander Brozović, *Građa za povijest Koprivnice* (Koprivnica, 1978), p. 146.

⁷⁴ R. Horvat, *Povijest Koprivnice*, p. 176.

⁷⁵ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva*, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁶ Hrvoje Petrić, *Koprivnica na razmeđu epoha (1765-1870)* (Koprivnica-Zagreb, 2000), p. 53.

houses inside the town walls. The great fire forced the citizens to build brick-made chimneys, while the authorities made sure such building materials were available. There was a committee to inspect all chimneys and list down those, which were fire hazard. Varaždin also had an indirect and preventive protection measure, by rewarding those citizens who were first to help in fire fighting, as well as later fire insurance policies with insurance companies. In 18th century, there were public citations for citizens who showed up at fires with fire-fighting sprinkling equipment, as well as those who appeared on site with large amounts of water to put out fire.⁷⁷

In 1767, Varaždin town authorities owned just a water-sprinkling device with two- three bucket capacity. In 1772, the Queen Maria Theresa issued a ordinance, listing necessary equipment that town authorities had to purchase for fire-fighting – 6 large buckets, 2 large sprinklers and 12 hand-held ones, 40 leather bags for carrying water, 12 ladders and 12 two-hook clamps; by 1773, the town authorities already owned most of this equipment.⁷⁸ In case of a fire, all citizens of Varaždin had a duty to rush to fire site and help out in fire fighting. In 1771, Varaždin authorities proclaimed ordinance that forced individual citizens, artisans in particular, to take part in fire fighting.⁷⁹

There were records of efficiency in fire prevention, for example, in putting out the fire in Varaždin in 1769. Members of town administration, showing up at fire sight, were to take charge in fire fighting. Duties were assigned to fire-fighters and their performance monitored constantly. Some firefighters would be assigned duty of wetting straw roofs and putting wet blankets of thick, wet linens, or soaked jackets. Some firefighters were in charge of taking out objects from burning homes, others watched over the burning site and taking care that fire did not spread; some were to draw and fetch water from wells to the fire site; some poured water over flames, others removed wooden fences between homes; some watched rooftops of pigsties and barns looking out for first flames; others removed hay and straw; the remaining firefighters (most often carpenters and bricklayers) separated burning parts of timber from intact parts of homes.⁸⁰ From the second half of 19th century, fire fighting was organized and specialized fire-fighting societies were established. No wonder the very first fire fighting volunteers in Croato-Slavonnian Kingdom was organized in Varaždin in 1864.⁸¹

There is very little data on social and political changes, caused by fires. In this respect, we have records on a fire in Varaždin in 1558, yet, there are no

⁷⁷ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva*, pp. 36-37.

⁷⁸ DAV, Arhiv grada Varaždin (AGK), akta, E-123 – 4.7.1771; E-132, 14.10.1772; C-432, 7.1.1772; 40-P-1774; M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva*, p. 46.

⁷⁹ R. Horvat, *Poviest Koprivnice*, p. 255.

⁸⁰ M. Androić, *Povijest vatrogastva*, pp. 47-48.

⁸¹

details.⁸² On 27 May 1582 at 2 PM, there was a disastrous fire in Varaždin, with notary public describing it as „burning down the entire town, save for one house on the bulwark“. In this fire, the parish church was destroyed, as well as the Franciscan church and a friary, and chapels of St. Vid, Michael and Holy Trinity. As a consequence, Franciscans left Varaždin. The fire also destroyed homes of the tollhouse clerks and customs officers in Varaždin; their rebuilding was helped by the king, who donated 60 Hungarian forint to each clerk. The fire did not damage the stronghold, yet it found its way across the walls into the suburbs and burned down those closer to the river Drava. The fire impoverished Varaždin citizens, who asked help from King Rudolf, and he ordered the Hungarian royal chamber to free them from tax for the next six years; as for state tax, they were relieved from one-year tax duty and assigned free serf labor. Towners were given help from Austrian archduke Ernest, who wrote to Varaždin County officials on 9 July, 1582 to provide free lumber for citizens who lost their homes in fire.⁸³

The new fire in Varaždin happened on 29 April 1586, when at least buildings were burned down.⁸⁴ In 1587, there were two fires; the first one occurred on 10 May in the Royal street, when 23 homes were torched; the second happened on 26 December, burning down only one home.⁸⁵ The records on fire in 1582 were not exaggerating, as records found in the last will and testament of Margareta, widowed wife of the late harness-maker Marčec, written on 12 April 1588. In his testament, Margareta speaks of Ivan Pergošić, taking over the business of her late husband, but never paying out agreed money; after his taking over «there was a great fire, that burned the town to the ground». ⁸⁶

Another fire in Varaždin started out from the home of Juraj Čoklić on 11 April 1592, leaving disaster, as a great number of Varaždin homes and lots of barns and stables.⁸⁷ Citizens fled from the fire and were taking their belongings into the sanctuary of St. Nicholas parish church; when it too caught up fire, they had to look for another sanctuary from flames.⁸⁸

In Spring of 1597, a fire of unknown causes burned down half of Križevci, along with protective palisade on Križevci anti-Ottoman protection, which put its defense role during the Hapsburg-Ottoman war (1593-1606) in jeopardy.⁸⁹

⁸² *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini*, 1, pp. 223-224.

⁸³ R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, pp. 108-109; *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini*, 1, pp. 225-226.

⁸⁴ *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini*, 1, pp. 225-226.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-293.

⁸⁷ R. Horvat, *Povijest Varaždina*, p. 119.

⁸⁸ *Protocolla magistratus liberae et regiae civitatis Varasdini*, 2, pp. 104-106, p. 110, pp. 117-118, p. 125.

⁸⁹ Ferdo Šišić, *Acta Comititalia Regni Croatiae Dalmatiae Slavoniae*, 4, (Zagreb 1917), p. 362.

During 17th century, Križevci recorded fires in 1613⁹⁰ and in 1684⁹¹; in 18th century, fires occurred quite frequently in years 1735, 1736, 1737, 1739, 1743 and 1745; however, only partial records were kept, insufficient for in-depth analysis.⁹²

Zagreb city senate in late April 1645 decreed, that all serfs and subjects of Hrašće estates, within city limits, had to report to Zagreb's Upper town and help transport burnt remains of homes. The Senate decided that for security reasons the gates Kamenita vrata be restored as soon as possible. As most of citizens were robbed of their food because of the fire, the Senate decided to donate a bushel of millet grain to impoverished citizens, and senators were given a half of the fourth of rye, mixed with barley, from the city's reserves.⁹³

Martin Lauš, a deputy rector of Jesuit friary in Zagreb in 1645 took effort to find carpenters among serfs on Jesuit estates. Carpenters were preparing lumber and other building material to replace damaged roofs on burned Jesuit buildings, bringing lumber from Paukov Vrh.⁹⁴ Reconstruction works on the cathedral were going on for several years.⁹⁵

Croato-Slavonian diet came to rescue after the fire, passing a resolution of 4 May 1645, securing a tribute from each Croato-Slavonian rank; each household would have to pay twelve denari tax to help rebuild Jesuit schools and buildings; nobility and magistrates were in charge of collecting and urgently paying this money to the Jesuits. At the same time, the parliament decided that the chief treasurer (collecting so-called 'thirtieth's all crops) Daniel Rauch divides half of Zagreb 'thirtieth' income into even shares as donation to the city, the bishop, Kaptol, Jesuits and Franciscans, as financial help to rebuild their churches, badly damaged in fire.⁹⁶

The Croato-Slavonian diet continued to help people of Zagreb after the 1674 fire too. Zagreb representatives asked for help to restore city council hall,

⁹⁰ F. Šišić, *Acta Comititalia Regni Croatiae Dalmatiae Slavoniae*, 5, (Zagreb 1918), p. 74.

⁹¹ *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora - Prothocolla generalium congregationum statum et ordum Regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae*, 1, (Zagreb, 1958), p. 455.

⁹² *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora - Prothocolla generalium congregationum statum et ordum Regnorum Dalmatiae, Croatiae et Slavoniae*, 3, (Zagreb, 1961-1966), p. 495; *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora*, 4, p. 67, p. 81, p. 82, p. 155, p. 390; *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora*, 5, p. 115; Neven Budak, "Društveni i privredni razvoj Križevaca do sredine 19. stoljeća", *Križevci – grad i okolica* (Zagreb, 1993), p. 46.

⁹³ R. Horvat, *Prošlost Zagreba*, p. 21.

⁹⁴ NSK, R 7821, *Historia Collegii Societatis Iesu in monte Graeco Zagrabiae siti*, I, pp. 123-124; R. Horvat, *Prošlost Zagreba*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ Ivan Krstitelj Tkalcich, *Prvostolna crkva Zagrebačka nekoć i sada* (Zagreb, 1885), pp. 33-37; Franjo Buntak, "Neki podaci i opažanja o ekonomskim prilikama u Zagrebu u 17. stoljeću", *Iz starog i novog Zagreba*, IV, (Zagreb 1968), pp. 68-69; Lelja Dobronić, *Biskupski i kaptolski Zagreb* (Zagreb, 1991), pp. 42-45.

⁹⁶ *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora*, 1, p. 126.

and the parliament granted their appeal writing off their 2 year- property taxes (dica regni) that Zagreb had to pay on income from lands and serfs. Zagreb city council also pleaded for help with King Leopold I., who wrote off their debt of 1200 forint, city hall had to pay into the royal treasury. The king also decreed that the same tribute be written off for the next 15 years, however, collected moneys should be used for rebuilding and restoration of their churches and fortifications.⁹⁷ The parliament session, held on 27 November, 1675 wrote off 'thirtieth' tribute due to disastrous fire.⁹⁸

Jesuits also came to help the impoverished Zagreb citizens. Until they rebuild their homes, citizens were given Jesuits' buildings for temporary use. Another huge problem occurred, as a direct consequence of the fire: in 1674 Zagreb was hit by famine, as the fire destroyed all grain and foods in warehouses; famine was soon followed by fatal diseases and epidemics. Jesuits again were helping out with medicine and food they were bringing from their estates; many hungry citizens of Zagreb waited in line in front of their friary. In those days, a total count of 18.000 dead from hunger and epidemic of fatal diseases skyrocketed. In order to avoid starvation and death, many families moved out to Slavonian regions under the Ottomans. villagers from Zagreb's suburb Jakuševac had the same plan, but Jesuits gave them money to buy food and thus helped them change their minds.⁹⁹

The fire that had the greatest impact on political, social and economic relations occurred in Varaždin on 26 April 1776. Not only more than half buildings were destroyed by the flames, but the then leaders of Croato-Slavonian Kingdom moved out to Zagreb as well- the viceroy, viceroy's council (Magistrate), Croatian royal council (government), that had chosen Varaždin for their seats from 1767; until the fire, Varaždin was considered Croatian capital. Beside supreme authorities and key figures of Croato-Slavonian Kingdom, a number of officials and part of nobility moved out to Zagreb too.¹⁰⁰ Varaždin was decreed to build houses of bricks exclusively, which reduced the danger of having new fires. From the second half of Nineteenth century, there were firefighting volunteers brigades all over Croatia and Slavonia (the very first one established in Varaždin in 1864).

⁹⁷ R. Horvat, *Prošlost Zagreba*, p. 30.

⁹⁸ *Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora*, 1, p. 366.

⁹⁹ R. Horvat, *Prošlost Zagreba*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Horvat 1993, 269-270.

Über Brände und urbanisierte Umgebung der freien königlichen Städte des Königreichs Kroatien und Slawonien in der frühen Neuzeit

Zusammenfassung

Die freien königlichen Städte – Zagreb, Varaždin, Koprivnica und Križevci – waren in der frühen Neuzeit die am stärksten bevölkerten Siedlungen in Kroatien und Slawonien. Diese Städte waren hauptsächlich aus leicht brennbaren Materialien (Holz, Stroh u. ä.) gebaut. Die Städte erlitten Brände durchschnittlich etwa einmal in dreißig Jahren. Zagreb wurde beispielsweise von Feuersbrünsten in den Jahren 1624, 1645, 1674, 1706, 1731 und 1786 ergriffen. Im Aufsatz werden die Brände in den genannten Städten im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert untersucht. Um irgendwelche Schutz gegen Feuer zu sichern, wurden Nachtwachen in den Städten schon anfangs des 17. Jahrhunderts organisiert. Der Kroatische königliche Rat ordnete im Jahre 1711 an, dass alle Anordnungen über Feuer und Brände öffentlich und laut auf den Versammlungen der Mitglieder der Zünfte vorgelesen werden sollten, und die Zunftgenossen mussten bei Ausbruch eines Feuers ihre Hilfe und Unterstützung leisten. Seit der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts werden im ganzen Kroatien und Slawonien freiwillige Löschmannschaften organisiert (die erste Löschmannschaft wurde 1864 in Varaždin gegründet).